

Texas Immunization Stakeholder Working Group (TISWG)

Charge

Background and Purpose

Results of the 2003 National Immunization Survey (NIS) show that 78.1 percent of Texas children ages 19 months through 35 months were fully vaccinated in the 4:3:1 vaccine series.¹ While this figure represents a 9.5 percent increase (6.8 percentage points) over the previous year's 71.3 percent, the national immunization rate for 2003 was 82.2 percent. Raising vaccine coverage levels for Texas children as well as ensuring appropriate adult immunizations is one of the highest priorities for the Department of State Health Services (DSHS). The purpose of the Texas Immunization Stakeholder Working Group (TISWG) is to support statewide efforts to raise vaccine coverage levels.

The state immunization system is complex and requires collaboration among many public and private entities. Recent studies indicate that raising vaccine coverage levels will require a comprehensive, coherent, strategic approach. In accordance with legislation passed by the 78th Legislature and other recommendations for increasing partnerships, the TISWG will include representatives from the public sector, private sector, and community groups.

The Executive Sponsor of the working group will be Casey Blass, Section Manager, Disease Prevention and Intervention, Department of State Health Services. Mr. Blass will provide direction, support, and approval authority for all working group activities.

The TISWG will provide a forum for diverse partners in the state immunization system to share ideas, perspectives, best practices, and resources to more effectively target efforts to raise vaccine coverage levels in Texas. The working group will determine roles and responsibilities, timelines, deliverables, and steps to implement working group activities.

Objectives and Activities

Following are the objectives for the working group and activities to accomplish each objective. The activities may change as new immunization challenges arise.

OBJECTIVE 1: Provide support for activities to raise vaccine coverage levels and help increase awareness of the importance of early childhood and adolescent vaccination.

Activity 1: Help DSHS implement best practices identified nationally for raising vaccine coverage levels. Best practices include the following:

¹ The NIS is conducted by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). The 4:3:1 series is four doses of diphtheria-tetanus-pertussis vaccine [DTP/DTaP], three doses of poliovirus vaccine, and one dose of a measles-containing vaccine.

- Registries
- Reminder/Recall Systems
- Public/Provider Education
- Promote a medical home for all children

Activity 2: Help DSHS implement legislative mandates and other recommendations considering best practices. Specific recommendations and mandates on which the working group will focus are as follows:

- To assure appropriate provider education on immunizations, promote “Best Practices” Guidelines for providers on the delivery of vaccines. (*Immunizing Texas: A State Plan to Increase Immunization Rates in Texas*)
- Assist DSHS in developing continuing education programs and materials for providers relating to immunizations and the Vaccines for Children (VFC) program operated by the department. (HB 1920)
- Increase public and private awareness of and support for early childhood immunizations. (SB 486)
- Work with TEA to increase immunization awareness and participation among parents of preschool and school-age children by jointly applying for federal funds for immunization awareness and vaccination programs; and creating partnerships to increase awareness and participation in the state’s early childhood vaccination program. (SB 486)

OBJECTIVE 2: Work with DSHS to identify and implement improvements to the state immunization system.

Activity 1: Improve collaboration among public, private, and community groups involved in the state immunization system.

Activity 2: Help DSHS to better identify and reach pockets of need.

Activity 3: Help DSHS identify and evaluate improvements to the Texas Immunization Registry.

Assumptions:

Following are assumptions under which the working group will operate:

- The working group will evaluate its charge and actions for effectiveness at least annually.
- The working group will meet quarterly. Sub-groups will report to working group at least quarterly.

- The working group will take action to support statewide consistency, quality, and effectiveness in targeting efforts to raise vaccine coverage levels while being flexible to accommodate local needs.
- The working group will seek opportunities for partnership and collaboration.
- Working group activities will be sustainable and evaluated for effectiveness.
- In the long run, the working group's actions will raise vaccine coverage levels.
- DSHS will be responsive to working group guidance and input.
- Working group members and their organizations will commit to take action and be accountable.

Working Group Participants

- Department of Assistive and Rehabilitative Services, Division of Early Childhood Intervention
- Health and Human Services Commission (HHSC)-- Medicaid
- Health and Human Services Commission (HHSC)—Office of Early Childhood
- National Medical Association Texas Lone Star Chapter
- Parents Requesting Open Vaccine Education (PROVE)
- Texas Academy of Family Physicians
- Texas Association of Health Plans
- Texas Association of Local Health Officials (TALHO)
- Texas Education Agency
- Texas Medical Association
- Texas Parent Teacher Association
- Texas Pediatric Society
- Texas Pharmacy Association
- Texas Nurses' Association